

Message Text

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ACTION VO-03

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R 171437Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4446
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: CGEN, CVIS, LE

REF: BEIRUT 4166

1. JOSEPH RAGEH, WHO INTRODUCED SELF AS COMMISSAIRE OF THE LEBANESE SURETE GENERALE, CAME TO EMBASSY SEPTEMBER 16 TO INFORM CONSOFF OF NEW FORMAT FOR LEBANESE PASSPORTS ISSUED BY SURETE GENERALE AFTER AUGUST 1. RAGEH GAVE CONSOFF SAMPLE OF NEW TYPE PASSPORT AND A MIMEOGRAPHED NOTE FROM DIRECTION GENERALE DE LA SURETE GENERALE ANNOUNCING INTRODUCTION OF PASSPORT FORMAT. NOTE ALSO STATED THAT ANY OTHER TYPE LEBANESE PASSPORT ISSUED AFTER AUGUST 1 IS CONSIDERED NULL AND VOID. RAGEH'S VISIT WAS APPARENTLY INDEPENDENT OF LEBANESE EMBASSY HERE. HE TOLD CONSOFF THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT FORMAL PASSPORT LEBANESE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS WILL USE.

2. RAGEH EXPLAINED THAT QUANTITY OF REGULAR SERIES LEBANESE PASSPORTS WITH LIGHT BLUE COVERS HAD BEEN STOLEN IN ATTACK ON SURETE GENERALE IN MARCH. ACCORDING TO RAGEH, ANY LIGHT BLUE PASSPORT BEARING SERIAL NUMBER AFTER 276,000 WAS ISSUED ILLEGALLY.

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3. EMBASSY IS SENDING SAMPLE PASSPORT AND NOTE TO DEPART-

MENT VIA AIR POUCH. VISA APPLICANTS HAVE PRESENTED PASS-
PORTS IDENTICAL TO RAGEH SAMPLE SINCE EARLY AUGUST.
DOCUMENT DIFFERS MARKEDLY FROM PRE-1974 STYLE LEBANESE
PASSPORT ISSUED BY LEBANESE AUTHORITIES AT JOUNIEH AFTER
LOSS OF SURETE GENERALE BUILDING (REFTEL). COVER IS NAVY
BLUE WITH CEDAR TREE EMBOSSED IN CENTER. ARABIC LETTERING
IS ABOVE TREE AND "REPUBLIQUE LIBANAISE PASSEPORT" IS
BELOW. SIZE OF TREE AND LETTERING APPROXIMATE THAT USED
ON REGULAR LIGHT BLUE LEBANESE PASSPORT. THERE ARE ARE OTHER
DIFFERENCES IN COLOR OF PASSPORT PAGES, DESIGN OF INSIDE
COVERS, AND MANNER OF AFFIXING BEARER'S PHOTOGRAPH TO
PAGE 3.

4. COMMENT: LEBANESE VISA APPLICANTS HERE NOW PRESENT ANY
ONE OF FOLLOWING PASSPORTS: (A) REGULAR LIGHT BLUE LEBANESE
PASSPORT ISSUED BY SURETE GENERALE PRIOR MARCH 1976;
(B) LIGHT BLUE PASSPORT ISSUED BY LEFTIST AUTHORITIES
AFTER MARCH; (C) NAVY BLUE PASSPORT IN PRE-APRIL 1974
FORMAT ISSUED BY CHRISTIAN AUTHORITIES AT JOUNIEH
BETWEEN APRIL AND JULY 1976; AND (D) REVISED NAVY BLUE
PASSPORT ISSUED BY SURETE GENERALE AT BEIRUT AFTER
AUGUST 1(RAGEH SAMPLE).
CRAWFORD

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